

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2003

Mr. Kenneth Clark
Network Director
Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Dessert Pacific Healthcare Network
5901 East 7th Street
Long Beach, California 90822-5201

Dear Mr. Clark,

We are writing to express our concerns about the process that is being followed during the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) at VISN22, particularly at the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS).

We want to emphasize how important it is for us and our constituents that we have a full and fair process which includes active participation and input from all interested parties and stakeholders. As you recall, the 25-year Master Plan process was seriously flawed from the beginning. The Land Use Advisory Committee excluded a number of pivotal parties, including County and City elected officials such as ourselves who represent the adjacent residents to GLAHS. Moreover, the Land Use Advisory Committee did not reach a consensus on the final report. The report itself was perhaps the most troubling aspect of the process, as it recommended a staggering increase in development on the property of 4.5 million square feet of density.

After the Master Plan had failed, Secretary Principi came to GLAHS for a Town Hall meeting. On February 25, 2002, he sent a follow-up letter to Supervisor Yaroslavsky, indicating that he felt it was very important that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) partner with and receive input from the local community and elected officials. Secretary Principi gave assurances in the letter that CARES would include community involvement.

We are writing in hopes of establishing a more thoughtful and inclusive process. GLAHS is situated as a unique VA property in the United States, closely surrounded by several homeowners' associations and community groups. We are heartened by your commitment and willingness to enter into a process with "full discussion and disclosure," and want to ensure that the CARES process includes meaningful opportunities for our constituents to participate and shape the process. We feel a series of ongoing, well-publicized Town Hall meetings must be scheduled so that veterans, communities, residents, stakeholders and elected officials can provide

feedback at each step of the process. It does not make sense to hold a Town Hall discussion once decisions have been made and sent to VA headquarters.

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We look forward to a productive and constructive CARES process in which all parties can participate and be heard.

With kind regards, we are

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

CINDY MISCIKOWSKI
City of Los Angeles
Councilwoman, Eleventh District

HAW:lp